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S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D O N K

E A S T E R - D A Y , 1755,

A T T H E 10

Parish Church of St. M A R Y ' s ,

A N D O N

E A S T E R - D A Y , 1757,

A T T H E

Parish Church of St. B R I D G E T ' s ,
D U B L I N .

W I T H A

P R E F A C E

Setting forth the

Reasons of its Publication at this Time.

*Of the Hope and the Resurrection of the Dead, I
am called in Question. Acts xxiii. 6.*

Μεμνήνασι δ' αὐτοῦ διαβαλλοῦντας.

D U B L I N :

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P R E F A C E

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

(I.)



THE Author of the following Discourse for several Reasons, is extremely averse to make this public Appearance at this Time. One from his Fears, that his Credit as a Preacher, will rather Fall than Rise by it ; where a Man has made a Fortune by Scrapping and Industry, he rarely chuses, to venture it at Play ; *Periculosa plenum opus aleæ*. Besides, it is in his own Opinion, one of the lowest of his own little Performances, with no Marks of Taste, Erudition, or even Industry ; and not being at Liberty to change it's Dress, to embellish and set it off, so as to fit it for the Company it is to appear in, complains sadly of the Necessity laid upon him by the mistaken Apprehensions of others.

A (II.) Is, that as Times go, he sees Reason to apprehend, that nothing of this Kind will bear its own Charges, and in a Season like the present, when the Demands of the Indigent, are greater than the Superfluities of his Stock will answer, had no Mind to draw upon him an unnecessary Expence: A Time was, even in his Memory, when a different Taste prevailed, things of this Sort were received with Relish, and eagerly sought; but that Time is gone, with little Probability of returning soon: However, as the Particularity of the Occasion may excite some Curiosity, where-ever that Curiosity may operate, he hath provided, that it may be gratified at the lowest possible Expence.

A (III.) Arises from the Apprehension, that of the *few* who do read, *few* are competent Judges of the Question before them. For why? the Question is to determine of the Author's Orthodoxy, and yet before Decision can be made, the previous Question, he imagines, must first be decided; *by what Rule he is to be tried.*

The Reason of this some of his Readers may possibly be at a Loss to comprehend, and such he is obliged to inform, that about half a Century ago, a Controversy arose about the Resurrection of the same Body; wherein *John Locke*, Esq; was Appellant, and Dr. *Stillingfleet*, Bishop of *Worcester* was Defendant, occasioned by a Paraphrase and Commentary of the Former's, on one of *St. Paul's* Epistles.

In the Conduct of this Controversy, they are to be told, that the Learned were much divided, Multitudes took to each Side, the greater Number he believes to the Bishop's, and the Clergy particularly
seemed

seemed generally to agree, that what the Bishop maintained was the Doctrine of the Catholic Church, as explained by the Fathers, and set forth in our Articles and Creeds.

From this *Æra*, they are farther to observe, that in the Matter before them, a new Standard of Orthodoxy seems to have been settled, before that Appeal was to the Scriptures; ever since, the Issue to be tried was, and now is, whether the Author in what he has advanced, sides with the Bishop or the Philosopher.

Some may possibly complain of this as a Hardship, for some there still be, who have a mighty Regard for the Scriptures; of this old fashioned Cast the Author is one, yet makes no Complaint, and the Reader will presently see he has no Reason, he only fears that by the Choice of this new Umpire, the Reader, if he is a Stranger to the mentioned Controversy, has never read it nor heard of it, will be a little puzzled when he comes to judge.

Pandere res, alta Sylva, & caligine mersas, the Author willingly contributes to give them all the Help he can, and offers a Clue to lead them, thro' the Windings of this dark and intricate Labyrinth: He tells them, that about twenty Years ago, he had attentively read over this Controversy; since which time he hath hardly once troubled his Thoughts about it; tho' his Judgment of it at the Time, he very well remembers. It began he thinks in fair Criticism, and upon that Footing, might have been fairly decided; but in the Progress, dwindling by degrees into Logic and Metaphysics, it ended at last, as most Controversies about Misteries have, in a mere *LOGOMACHY*: The Philosopher (he was then of Opinion) expert and able as he was, by his as expert and able
Anta-

Antagonist, was pushed into some very odd and unaccountable Absurdities ; and on the other hand, the good Bishop, plunging himself too highly in the Advantage of allowed Orthodoxy, and greater Persons on his Side, pushed his Advantage too far, and bore too hard upon the Philosopher, charging him with Heresy and ill Meaning, where he certainly disavowed it, and probably did not intend it : However, so it happened, that the great Principal and important Truth, escaped in the Fray, without being wounded or hurt, and the Combatants when they were tired with beating the Air, might have sat down and shaken Hands, had not some unlucky hot Spirits appeared as Seconds, and taken the Field ; by whom the poor Philosopher and his Partisans, have since been delivered over to *Satan*, and allowed no Place in the Resurrection, upon the Presumption *that there might be a joyful Resurrection without them.** In Sum, that the Reader may not want Light to direct him, he candidly confesses, that neither then or since, could he ever bring himself in all Things to agree intirely with either ; and if in this Discourse, any uncommonly sagacious and penetrating Eye, should suspect, find out, or accuse him of trimming too nicely between them, without declaring explicitly for either, he beseeches them in Kindness, or of pure Christian Charity, if from no other Principle, to consider, that a contrary Procedure had been inconsistent with the true and real Design of that Discourse : Which, *Sans Raillerie*, was none other than what he hath there openly and honestly set forth.

In

* For this charitable Censure, the Reader may see a Sermon preached before the University of *Oxford*, by *Winch, Holdsworth*, 1720.

In Points where Scripture is silent, or even of doubtful Interpretation, he is rivetted in the Opinion, that the less they are meddled with, the better, and in Consequence of that Opinion, piques himself upon having always avoided them : Some Right Reverend Prelates there are in this Town, to whose Judgment, he pays a willing Deference, who have had the Fortune frequently to hear him, and to them he appeals, whether they have ever heard any thing to object upon this Score. In short, so little sensible is he of having given Occasion for such Censures, that with Difficulty he has brought himself to give it a serious hearing. And in his Account, it must be an odd Course of Study, or a much odder turn of Understanding, that can lead to the Discovery of any Heresy, or ill Meaning in this Discourse ; to some latent, to him, yet inconceivable Prejudice, the Charge he conceives must be imputed, what, possibly Time may discover ; but since he is upon this Topic : Once for all, he begs leave to make this solemn and full Declaration of his general Sentiments in all such Matters.

SCRIPTURE he insists, is the Rule of Orthodoxy to all Churches, but the Members of particular Churches, with this for its Foundation ; *have another, viz. the established Doctrines and Forms.* As a Minister of the established Church of Ireland, he thinks he is tied down, even if he should happen to disapprove, not to dispute or bring into Controversy, least of all from the Pulpit, any of them ; he knows he is hired, and paid for the contrary, to maintain them, when regularly called, or conscientiously summoned ; if in his Researches, a contrary Judgment should force itself upon him, he is content in Bishop Taylor's Phrase, with the Liberty of prophesying privately, without attempting to disturb the Churches
Peace,

Peace, or to raise Doubts and Scruples in weak Minds, seldom easily, never clearly got over, by such Inquiries as the Majority are either able or willing to make. Of this his Temper, Judgment, and Resolution, he presumes, he had given the Public a sufficient Testimony and Pledge not long ago, in Letters addressed to his Grace the Lord Primate, in Defence of *St. Paul*, from the Objections of Lord *Bolinbroke*. * In this Judgment he still is, and more he thinks cannot be required of him; for *virtute relictâ invidiam placare*, he never can nor will consent to.

He is very well aware, that there is a dangerous (in time it may be a pestilent) Sect growing up among us, some of whom (for he thinks he can trace a Scheme from some of them, to exclude him the Pulpits in this Town) may have helped by their good Offices to fasten this Charge upon him; who go farther in the Matter than he can persuade himself to bear them Company: The fondest in the World of dealing in Mystery, and in a Method of Argumentation, that will at any time prove, *quidlibet ex quolibet*, without allowing any one the Liberty of examining their Proofs. In this respect true and trusty *Pythagoreans*, the *ipse dixit* of their Master *J. H.* is Warrant enough to bear them out, who think Christians sufficiently instructed if they can be sure of their Baptism, and intituled to Heaven by the mere Merit of being born Members of an Episcopal Church, *i. e.* of the Seed of *Abraham*, consistently with their first fixed Principle, that the Old Testament is the only Rule of Faith, (and the New written in a Language in which the Mysteries of their Faith could not be expressed, which the Apostles and first Preachers of Christianity, even with the Gift of Tongues,

* See Letter 5. *ad finem*.

for want of understanding the *Hebrew* were obliged to use, is of no Use at all) and so for every thing else to depend implicitly upon their Teachers.

Now in Contradiction, open and avowed Opposition to these, he owns he has sometimes ventured, to assert the common Privileges of Christianity; and though the Disciples of this most uncharitable, ill-natured, and hot-headed Zealot, should ever so often piteously bewail the Misfortune of our Church in breaking off from the Communion of *Rome*: (the helpless, hopeless Estate she is reduced to, of having it out of her Power to be reconciled, *for having written Mystery over the triple Crown, and concluding him that wears it to be the Man of Sin*, as well as from the miserable Exchange made at the Reformation, by taking the Interpretation of Scripture out of the Hands of the Catholic Church, and putting it into the Hands of antichristian Laymen, those reformed Hypocrites who are perpetually declaiming against the Inquisition, &c.) he has the Conscience and Courage to declare, that among the different Sorts of Heresy in the World, there is none he is so much afraid of as *Popery*, its indomptible Spirit teeming with Mischief: And when he sees it under the Disguise of Piety, working its way, and in Conjunction with *Jacobitism*, striking at the very Foundation of our common Christianity, and our excellent Constitution, he thinks himself not only acquitted, but justified, for what slight Essays he has made in this way; and when he hath perceived in one Instance the Poison of this Heresy, under a raw and crude Indigestion, held out in a Pacquet from the Pulpit, at others, artfully and gently insinuated, gilded and set off with an agreeable Manner and striking Elocution, it came into his Thoughts, that thither the Weight of a Church Censure, instead of being aimed at his inno-

cent Head, had been more seasonably and judiciously directed.

To return from this Digression, if such it will be thought, The Author may now, even in the Sense of the subtle and plausible Dr. *Patten*, * plead that he is *ετοιμος πρὸς ἀπολογίαν*; in his own, bids fair for a rational Defence, and the only Difficulty now in his way rises, he apprehends, from the Character of his late Accuser; a Gentleman and a Scholar, of Note in his Profession, accustomed to hear and probably hearing well, can neither be supposed not to know these Things, or to have mistaken the Author's Sense.

The Author willingly admits it in Part, as far as the Gentleman's Character is concerned; and hence only was or could be induced to send out a Piece so unfinished and imperfect. The same Censure from a hundred others, as in a former Instance, he would have laughed at, or despised: From the Circumstances now mentioned, the Thing only became serious; but *ne sit veritate potentior opinio*, In bar therefore to what is alledged, if he is not yet fully acquitted, the Public owes him this Token of Candour, to suspend their Opinion, till the Gentleman pleases to favour them with the Reasons of his Procedure: He has been thrice called upon for them, he promises to give them, but as yet *hath not had Leisure, from the Hurry of Business, to take it into Consideration to give a proper Answer*; whence without Injury to him, or Suspicion of Prejudice against him, we reasonably infer, that something in the Matter sticks with him, and puzzles him; that either the Point is not so clear as he probably at first imagined, or may be is not perfectly satisfied with

* See his Sermon, printed by *Watson*, upon 1 Pet. iii. 15.

his own Reasons and Motives, for laying the Accusation: How it is, the Author pretends not to say; at present he is so favourably disposed, that he will not allow himself even to guess; he wishes to recover his Esteem and to stand well with him; no old Pique shall mar it on his Side: But till this is cleared up, he hath so far a Right to demur, to plead that the Gentleman might have been mistaken; and in the mean time begs Leave to make farther Trial of the Reader's Patience in the following dry and insipid Narrative, without any *Sallie d' Esprit*, or any thing to amuse him, except he be already interested in Defence of the Parties, of *Culprit* or his *Accuser*.

After lying several Years neglected among old Papers, the said shabby Discourse, as the Title Page tells you, unfortunately was brought out and delivered on *Easter-day* 1755; some Days after, by some obscure, odd, inconsiderable — (the Author was told who, but thinks it below him to remember) a puffing Advertisement was seen in a paltry Newspaper, which it seems had the Effect of putting some, who otherwise had never thought of it, upon recollecting what there was in it offensive; for so it is, that a readiness to carp, in vulgar Acceptation, implies Sagacity, and the Fear of being reputed less apprehensive than their Neighbours, set them upon striving who shall be forwardest: To shew how this discerning Faculty is quickened by a Disposition to Slander, to detect some mysterious Cabballa under any innocent Expression, the following little Anecdote will serve. BEZA in his Commentary on *John* viii. had intimated a Suspicion, that the Passage of the Woman taken in Adultery was interpolated; hence *Scioppius*, a very learned contemporary Zealot, would needs have it, that *Beza* was conscious of his own Incontinence, *Quid solus ipse cum candida sua sola agere consuevit;*

suevit; because in the Text it is said, that her Accusers abashed slunk off, and left *Jesus* and her alone in the midst.* And to prove the Application not impertinent, with a serious Air, in Tone and Stile of Brotherly Love, the Author was then told, that in those few but pathetic Words, p. 27. I AM FORBID, the microscopic Intellect of some pious Souls had discovered very dangerous Notions, which he was afraid to speak out; when the Author, with none other Emotion than by a Smile of Pity, parted with his Friend; but now at length, lest it should still be *alta mente repositum*, and rankling to his Prejudice, in Testimony of a generous Compassion, assures them, appealing to the Sense, as it lies before them, that in those Words he had none other Meaning, direct or indirect, but to express his own submissive Veneration and awful Respect to the Authority of God's Word.

Others, though incompetent Judges by their own Confession of the controversial Part, but unwilling to be behind their Neighbours, startled, or were astonished, at an Assertion, p. 38. admitting in plain Terms, *That such as are happiest in this Life, have best Chance for being happy in another*; which, in their Account, was giving Vice the Preference of Virtue: For with Eyes dazzled with Glare, or tinctured with some Jaundice of the Heart, they had laid their Account that the Wicked were oftener more happy, *i. e.* more prosperous and abounding, than the Righteous. To this also he only replied with a Smile of Contempt, but now compassionately begs, if they can but read, that they may take the Benefit of a second Thought, and here in the Volume as it lies before them satisfy themselves, how entirely groundless their Surmise

* See Bayle Dict. Art. *Bembus*:

was. If they dislike the Doctrine, he recommends to them, the first Volume of *The Christian Life*, by Dr. *Scott*, an Author well reputed both for Piety and Orthodoxy.

Thus the Thing went on with a careless Neglect on his Part, till he was told, that these doleful Accounts had reached the Archbishop's Ears; when in Testimony of Respect he waited upon his Grace, submitted his Notes to his Inspection, and in Return had the Pleasure of this Testimony, *That he saw nothing in it to disapprove, that the Censure he believed was the Effect of Party Prejudice, and thence friendly warning him in such Matters to be upon his Guard.* Thus satisfied, regardless he went on of others Censures. The Detractors had spent their Venom, it died away, and seemed to be forgotten, till the Return of the same Festival in this same Year 1757, when the Gentleman already referred to had the Misfortune to be his Hearer; and soon after, in Terms as disagreeable as unexpected, expressed a Dislike: The Thing quickly reached his Ear, and he owns made some Impression; but, with a Heart innocent and well assured, he resolved, and had certainly overlooked it, had the Consequence been less affecting; for in the succeeding Week so it was, that by his Means the Author was pointed out at a public Visitation, as a Person of suspected Orthodoxy, and unfit to assist his Brethren upon such Occasions. Then was his Attention roused, and instantly applying to the Curate of the Parish, whose Turn he had taken, to be certified of what he had heard, from that modest and sensible Gentleman, then in Company with Dr. *Wynne* at the Library, he received this, only vague, Account, " That
" what he had heard, in the Manner then repeat-
" ed, had in Truth been intimated, but in a gene-
" ral way, without naming any one; and that had
" it

“ it not been for certain Interrogatories from By-
 “ standers, in his Construction, it would have passed
 “ as intended for some others; for as he had been
 “ very attentive to the Discourse, and could not re-
 “ collect that there was any thing in it that could be
 “ reasonably objected to, he was exceedingly surpris-
 “ zed, when he found the Author was the Person
 “ pointed at.”

Putting the two Accounts together, the Author now could hardly be at a Loss to know from what Quiver the Arrow was shot; and accordingly, by Letter in Terms of Civility, applied to the Gentleman, desiring to be informed of the Reasons of his Dislike, that by his superior Knowledge and Understanding, he might be taught to correct whatever was amiss. In return he had only a verbal Message to this Effect, *That he was then hurried, but would send an Answer.* Five Days had passed when he sent again a Card with his Compliments to the same Purpose——He was not at home. No Notice was taken of it——On *Monday* the 16th ult. his Grace the Archbishop coming to Town, he waited upon him, in Company with Sir *Philip Hoby*, and the Rev. Mr. *Cobb*, when his Grace frankly owned, that Complaint had been made to him by —— that what he had said in his Charge to his Clergy, tho' only in general Terms, and in the ordinary way, without naming any one, was grounded on that Complaint; but had not understood, and was surprized to hear, that it was the identical Sermon he had seen before. The Author then expostulating with his Grace upon the Injury done him, and what was proper and necessary in his Vindication, was told, the Gentlemen present concurring, that the easiest and surest way, was by printing the Discourse. In this disagreeable Alternative, he resolved, first to repeat his Essay, to bring the Gentleman, if possible,
 to

to an Eclaircissement, and avoid what he has already owned he reluctantly submits to; to which receiving the following short, and in his Opinion too slighting and contemptuous Reply, *That he had not yet had Time to consider it, to give a proper Answer, till the Hurry of the Courts was over, and that if saying that was not satisfactory, I had his full Consent to follow my own Inclinations.* The Friends he consulted upon this Occasion were generally in Opinion, that he would certainly be wanting to himself, and might suffer by deferring; and now so it is.

Well: But is this in Fact the same Discourse? *Ans.* Not exactly in the second Delivery what it was in the first. P. 34. there is a Paragraph couched in a Parenthesis which was added intirely before the second, after the Archbishop had seen it; and since that another Paragraph, p. 43. mark'd thus ¶, intirely altered, for a Reason that will strike every Reader from the Sense of it; neither of them interfere with the Doctrine; in Shape, Colour, or Degree do not alter the Sense, so require no Apology; for every thing besides, he pledges his Veracity, Honour, every thing dear to him, that it is in Substance and Form the exact Same it was when delivered.

Judge then, Reader, of the Merits of the Case; spare the acknowledged Imperfections; criticise with what Severity you will upon the Matter. In the first Instance, from the bad Success of two such Disputants as *Locke* and *Stillingfleet*, he thought himself warranted to discourage a useless Curiosity in Points not clearly revealed; In the second, by the Sanction of the Archbishop's Approbation. In the first Malice and Ignorance had both a Share in the Indictment; in the last, though he hath the Pleasure of knowing that Men of Sense and Learning were present, who were attentive, pleased, and spoke better

better of it than perhaps it deserved: he is still disposed to hope there was neither. But when it is considered, how the Characters of Clergymen are affected by such Imputations; that the Wounds they give are deeper, more lasting, more sensibly felt, and less within the Power of Remedy, than any other that can be given; that Folly, Phrenzy, Immorality, in all the Shapes and Degrees it can be practised, are comparatively Trifles light as Air; that thousands have sunk under the Weight of this Calumny without a Capability of emerging; and by the Manner in which the Accusation was laid, the Censure and Inhibition passed, it looks as intended, that the Author should feel its intire Weight, without any Opportunity of knowing whence it came, or any Means of Justification, the Reader he conceives will be in Opinion, that he complains with Reason, as yet with Modesty, and hath a Right to redress.

If he hath dwelled too long on the Subject, his Situation in the World, the Manner in which it might have affected him, must make his Apology; and, relying on the Reader's Indulgence, he is tempted to protract the Page, from a Sense he hath, that a Spirit of this Kind hath been long working against him; whence the following short Account of its Rise and Progress may not be impertinent.

In the Year 1735 he was called to preach at an annual Visitation, when he happened to slide a little out of the vulgar Tract, in defending the common Privileges of Christianity; some high-flying Brethren were offended, and by railing put him under the Necessity of printing that Discourse: * The Patron he chose was it seems as bad as the Discourse, but by it

* It is still to be sold at Messrs. Ewing's in Dame-street.

he got what he hath, and he remembers it with Gratitude to the Memory (he may say now Envy is dead) of that honest and good Man.

In 1743, the Day after he commenced D. D. he was called to preach at the Cathedral Church of St. Patrick's, Dublin, upon the Day in the Lat. Church, called *Dies Cinerum*: And ever since (if the Reader will excuse the Pun) *Incedit per Ignes suppositos Cineri Doloso*, some profound Adepts in Catholic Constitutions, without Capacity to apprehend the true Drift and Design of his Discourse, were sadly alarmed at an Attack, as they poor Souls imagined, upon the Discipline of the Church, so to unload their Consciences, *animas suas liberare*, away they went directly from their Stalls to the Arch-Bishop.

The Publication of it would have served to the Eviction of their Ignorance, perhaps, for it was well digested, helped his Credit as a Preacher; (in which way he owns he has gone in Search of Fame) but his Friends, the late and present Primates, whose Hands it went thro', set him, he believes, *rectus in Curia*, and he troubled himself no more with their Nonsense: In short, from that Instance, it came into his Head, what hath happened since, confirms the Suspicion, that he poor Man, inconsiderable as he is, both in his Attainments and Preferments, has this inexcusable Fault, that he is a better Protestant, than some People wish, or would have him: That he chuses to set out Religion, not in the modern meretricious Attire of Papal Catholicism, nor in the clumsy and slovenly Apparel of the Geneva Apostle; but in the old Apostolic Dress, *as a Reasonable Service*: *Et hinc illæ Lacrymæ*, for he has none other way of accounting for the Abuse sometimes pointed at him.

These two, with this now in Controversy, are the only Things which have laid a Foundation for the injurious Charge; for as to Matters abstruse, metaphysical and meerly speculative, he hath always kept clear of them, and by the Grace of God, is determined so to do; well knowing with how little Certainty and less Satisfaction they are always handled; content if his own Faith be right, without hammering into the Heads of others, what few have Capacity to comprehend, and much fewer to explain.

And here he would beg leave modestly to recommend his Example to some others; from the Information and Assurance he hath, that the Way they are taking, will answer no End of Christianity; the Point they are labouring, is too intricate to be ever sufficiently explained. They may unsettle by it the Faith of real Believers, without drawing in such as are not; and may dispose Men to revert to Popery, who had the good Luck to be born Protestants. *Decidit in Scyllam, qui vult vitare charibdim.* In handling of it, they will hardly be able to keep clear of the culpable Extremes. Let them look back to the Controversy between Dr. *Sherlock* and Dr. *South*, on the TRINITY; in the Opinion of the best Judges, both meant to defend the Catholic Doctrine; yet alas! in explaining it, one ran into the extreme of *Tritheism*, and the other of *Sabellianism*. They charged it upon another, grew angry, scolded, and the Controversy ended not, till the Disputants tir'd, and out of Breath, sat down, just where they set out and began.

He advises therefore our grave and pious *Hutchinsonians*, to moderate their Zeal, and to correct at least, that very wicked, uncharitable, unchristian Disposition,

position, which prompts them to send every Man, who differs with them without Bail or Mainprise to the DEVIL : as indisposed as themselves to bring into Question, any established Truth of Christianity, he has the Courage to tell them above Board roundly and fairly, that what they want to prove, in the Way they explain it is impossible, that their Scheme is at best but the old absurd long exploded Scheme of the *Patricians* or *Sabellians*, and that their Method of Proof is not only incompetent but absurd, that he will go with them to their polluted Fountain ; to be able to assert this, he hath turned over the whole Dunghil of *J. H.* without the good Fortune of *Æsop's* Cock, of finding one Jewel ; but from thence hath been able to scrape and put together such a Bundle of noisome, stinking Weeds, of uncharitable, unintelligible, absurd and blasphemous Nonsense, as is not to be met with any where else (not *Exhortis Epicuri*) as will more than preponderate, and lay the Odour of that Scent which struck their olfactory Nerves from the fine variegated Nofegay presented to them by Mr. Advocate *Forbes*. *

That the Author can never give up, but is resolved at all Events, to defend the Authority of the New Testament, as the only unerring Test of all Theological Truth. That the Proofs of Christ's Divinity must be drawn thence ; and that to set it aside at once, destroys his Character, and sinks his Authority. That in the plausible admired Discourse of Dr. *Patten*, there is not a single Criticism upon one Word of the original Text, in which he is not mistaken, nor one of his Deductions, but what is groundless and false ; and that if he hath gained any Advantage by an injudicious Attack †, it is easily re-

C 2

trieved :

* See his Letter to a Bishop—a Writer of whom the Author in the main hath a good Opinion.

† See Dr. *Heathcote*, *Rem. &c.*

trieved : That tho' his servile Copyers from the Pulpit and out of it, deride and make a Jest of moral Virtue, and have taught Ladies affectedly to Lisp out, *hang Virtue what is it good for*, he is resolved, and thinks he is able to make out, that it is still of excellent use in Society, and that the Praise and Excellence of Faith, is to inforce, to raise and to improve it. In short, that under proper Encouragement, he might be the Instrument of oversetting their whole Scheme, and to lay it floundering in the Mud and Dirt, out of which it was drawn and wrought up.

Thus he thinks he hath sufficiently vindicated, and he trusts, acquitted himself ; the unprejudiced he presumes will be satisfied in the Account now given, and he both calls and looks to have some amends for the Injury either done or intended ; if the Public can forgive his trespassing upon their Patience so long, he will not put it to Trial again ; if Envy and ill Nature should still pursue him, he will pass it over with Contempt, and say, *Je suis bien aise, qu'elle se Grossisse, et prens plaisir à faire une mon-joye de pierres, que L'Envie m'ajettees, sans me faire mal.* *

* *Balzac Lettres Choieses.*

P. S. After the foregoing Sheets were wrought and sent to the Press, in Answer to one of the 10th. of *May*, the Author receiv'd the following Letter.

REVD. SIR,

I Am sorry I have not had Leisure to answer your's in Relation to your Sermon on the Resurrection sooner, I thought the Sermon an ingenious Discourse, but did not like your manner of explaining the Body that is to be raised, I thought you *made it no Body at all*, but something quite different from what we mean by Corporeal, something that we cannot, in this World have any Notion of : This I thought contrary to the common received Opinion, in a Point that seemed to me material ; and I thought it incumbent on me to mention it to the Arch-Bishop. If I be wrong, it is my Misfortune, and not my Fault ; I am sorry you should be the first to lay me under, what I thought a Necessity of so disagreeable an Office ; and I most heartily wish it may be the last.

I believe there are few Men more tender of the Characters of Clergymen than I am. I remember on my coming out of Church, I told two or three of your Hearers who first mentioned their Dislike to me, that I was of their Opinion. But I cannot recollect, that I have since mentioned any thing about it, to any Person, except the Arch-Bishop, and a Clergyman, with whom I consulted, and two or three others who first spoke of it to me.

You hint at Party Disputes, and an old paltry Squabble between you and me, that I have not thought of with any Degree of Resentment these many Years ; Passions of that Kind have but a small
Share

Share in my Constitution. I don't know that I bear ill Will to any Man.

Many People think preaching on abstruse Points of Controversy to ordinary Congregations, rather hurtful than useful, and I must confess I have been always of that Opinion: Surely, upon serious Reflection, you cannot but think, that since your preaching in this Way gives Offence (suppose only to weak Brethren) it would at least be prudent in you to quit it, and confine yourself to practical Subjects, that admit of no Dispute: If this be your Resolution, and you notify it to the *Arch-Bishop, or to me*, I am confident it will have a good Effect. I should be very sorry to see any Man who has Abilities and Inclination to make himself a useful Preacher, excluded from the Pulpits of this Town.

I am, Revd. S I R,

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant,

ALEX. McAULAY.

There is one Thing I forgot to mention, I hope you won't give yourself the Trouble of a Reply to this Letter. I have neither Time nor Inclination to enter into Disputes about Religion.

Ship-street, 30th May 1757.

The

The Reader has now before him a new Subject for Reflection and Criticism; but the Author determined to end, as he began, with good Temper, will content himself with two Remarks, 1. That it is undeniably plain that the Gentleman had misapprehended both the Sense and the Design of the Author's Discourse, with *St. Paul's* Allusion upon his Thoughts and his Words before him, 1 *Cor.* xv. 36, 37, 38. he must have had a very weak Understanding, or very perverse Will, to have incurred the Mistake here charged upon him. 2. That had the Case even been, as the Gentleman apprehends, he can hardly be excused for the Method he took to correct it. If there was no Ill-will in it, there was no Kindness, at best it was very inconsiderate; because, had not some Friends seasonably intimated what had happened, it might have defeated in one Respect all the Labours of his Life, and hurt his Family in a way never to be repaired; for a Man who deserves to be excluded from the Pulpits of this Town, deserves, he owns something worse: But the Gentleman has it in his Power to make Amends, and if *his Constitution* be such as he describes it, will certainly do it; that he may be under no Temptation to do otherwise, the Author forbears saying many Things that are now upon his Thoughts.

JUNE 1, 1757.

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S E R M O N

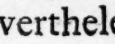
PREACH'D ON

*EASTER-DAY, 1755,
And 1757.*

I COR. XV. 35.

*But some Man will say, How are the Dead raised?
and with what Bodies do they come?*



T is not clear from the Manner in which the Apostle hath introduced and censured this Question, whether it proceeded from mere Curiosity in the Inquirer, or from down-right positive Unbelief. If from Curiosity only, the Censure, tho' severe is nevertheless just ; because Questions that are really
D useless.

useless, are certainly foolish ; and where the Resolution of them, would neither make Men wiser or better, they deserve some Reprehension for troubling themselves or others about them : But if it proceeded of Unbelief, as there is some Ground to suppose, it even so deserved some Censure : Because it was easy to observe somewhat analagous in the Course of Nature, which considered, might have hindered the Objector from concluding, that a Body once dead could not possibly revive or rise again. *Thou Fool ! that which Thou sowest is not quickned except it die.*

The Word, *αφρων*, is literally expressive of one, who thinks or judges amiss ; and hath no such disagreeable Harshness as is implied in the *English* Word *Fool*, by which we render it here for want of a better.

The Sense is this : Your Objection to the Christian Doctrine, shews Want or Weakness of Judgment : For what you think proves the Impossibility of a Resurrection, is in Reality a preparatory Step to it : For unless the Body first die, it could not rise again ; which you may conclude from the common Course of Nature, in all its Changes and Productions.

But whatever was the Ground of the Objection, whether it proceeded of Curiosity or Unbelief, the Apostle's View seems plainly to have been to discourage and put a Stop to all such Inquiries ; for after all he hath said about it, he hath left us absolutely in the dark, and the Subject covered up in impenetrable Mystery : So he calls it, ver. 51. *Behold I shew You a Mystery, i. e.* something either improper for us to know, or which we have not Faculties to comprehend. In the New Testament, the Word Mystery

tery hath this ordinary Sense : Either it marks out some Truth heretofore hidden and mysterious, but now laid open and revealed. : Or something, which tho' explicable to human Reason, and the Object of Intellect, is yet unrevealed, and reserved for future and more convenient Discovery.

Among the Secrets of this latter Sort, is, that we are now treating of, how the Dead are raised, and with what Bodies they come? and I doubt not but there may be Curiosity enough, even in this Audience, to get me Attention, if I should go about to explain it : But I am forbid. For as the Undertaking might rather do you hurt, than any Service, so I am and always shall be content to make the Extent of Revelation, the Limit of my own Inquiries, at least in this Place. To proceed whilst I have that to enlighten and lead me ; and there to stop, as soon as it goes out and leaves me ; *for the Secret Things belong to God, Those only that are revealed to us and to our Children.*

However to keep to my Text, and to indulge, as far as I innocently may, that Curiosity, which I doubt not the bare reading of it hath raised, I shall in what follows, First, make some Observations on the Nature of the Question here proposed, in the View principally of exposing the Folly of all Attempts, to explain the secret Things of God, what the inspired Writings have not explained, but have for Reasons only known to the Divine Omniscient, and over-ruling Mind, reserved as Mysteries to be unfolded in a State to come. And (2.) shew you that the Hopes necessarily arising in the Breast of every Christian, from a full and firm Persuasion of the Truth and Certainty of the General Doctrine of the Resurrection, are such as tend both to the Felicity and Perfection of their Beings.

In a Congregation of Believers I must suppose, that there can be no Occasion, for insisting upon the Proofs of the Resurrection of Christ, or the Possibility of our own : The (1.) rests upon the Credibility of the Gospel History : The latter upon the Almighty Power attributed to God, as necessary at first in our Creation, as it will be at last in our Resurrection : There can be to him, no more Difficulty in raising a Dead Body, than in communicating to it at first, a Power of Living : In strict Account, the Acts are both the same, and require the same Power, to collect and put together the Materials ; and then according to that noble and beautiful Expression in the Book of *Genesis*, *To breath into it the Breath of Life*.

Whatever then is to be the Manner of the Resurrection, in what way the Divine Power may operate, and in what ever way the Materials may be recollected and reunited, howsoever, when brought together, our Bodies shall be organised and improved, in order to be glorified, in whatever Speciality their Sameness will consist ; we have no positive Information, nor are we under any Necessity of supposing, that they are to be precisely and exactly the Identical Bodies in all Respects, that Lived and Died here, to consist of the same individual and numerical Particles.

This seems not to come into any Idea of Sameness, that we either can or are obliged to form ; it is a Subtlety not easily comprehended ; and whereof, if the Scriptures speak not the contrary, they are undoubtedly silent about : No Intimation can I find of any such Doctrine there, nor are the Arguments alledged in Proof of it, by any Means conclusive.

What

What is most plausibly urged in Proof of it, is this: That to make Retribution in Judgment just, it is necessary, that the same Bodies which bear so large a Share in the Sin and Virtue of our Actions, should bear their Share also in the Rewards or Punishments of them, and be happy or miserable in Proportion as they have contributed to either: This it is said is equitable, and what is equitable, God will certainly do in this and in every other Case.

The same say I, he undoubtedly will. And yet by reasoning from the same Attribute, the contrary perhaps should rather be inferred: for besides, that it seems to measure the Equity of God's Proceedings by the scanty Line of our own Knowledge and Notions, it gives to Matter a Capacity which it neither hath, nor can have, but by Derivation, and in Union with the Soul: For in the Acts of Sin and Virtue, our Bodies are not Agents, but Instruments intirely passive, material Organs that deserve neither Praise nor Blame: In Strictness, the Hand, *v. g.* that commits Murder, no more deserves Punishment, than the Poynard it grasped. So that to give this Argument any Weight, we must, you see, necessarily conclude, that the whole Man is just what we handle, or see and no more: That there is no immaterial Principle within, and that Cogitation, Intelligence, &c. * result only from certain Combinations and Modifications of Matter. This Argument therefore, though it may serve to support our Belief of the General Doctrine of the Resurrection, and no farther it ought to have been carried, will yet be insufficient to establish this

* An Absurdity to which Mr. LOCKE was at last driven, and very awkwardly maintained.

this Nicety of Explication : What it proves (and all that the good Christian wants to have proved) is only this, that to make a full and clear Account with Sin and Virtue, and to pay off the Ballance on both Sides, there is a Necessity for reuniting the Soul to Bodies of the same, or such similar Materials, so organised and so disposed as to fit them for the Actions and Operations of the same spiritual and immaterial Principle which actuated them here, before their Separation by Death. And this I think will infer a Sameness or Identity in the Form and Construction of the Body, but not in the Number or Quantity of the Constituent Particles.

We all see, that in Proportion as our Bodies are pure, sound and unadulterate, the Acts and Operations of the Soul are free, facile, and vigorous ; the Additions they receive from luxurious Habits ; the Filth and Corruption they inhale and gather in from a thousand contingent unavoidable Accidents in Life, like so many Clogs and Weights incumber, oppress, and bear her down, rendering her Operations, not only difficult, but uneasy and painful : It would seem therefore impossible, at least unaccountable, that any of that unwieldy, adventitious Mass, which so distracts, stupifies and deadens the Soul here, should re-enter the Composition and be reunited to it hereafter ; if it might be convenient for the Punishment of the Vicious, it cannot for the Beatification of the Just ; their Bodies we may reasonably suppose, will arise purged and purified from all foul and impure Mixtures, and in whatever Respect they are to be the same, to bring with them, perhaps no more than the Original Stamina, uncorrupted and sound ; which in the Opinion of some grounded on the Apostle's Allusion, may be the Seeds of *Reviviscence*, to evolve when the Divine Trumpet shall sound and quicken the Spring.

The

The Holy Scriptures are so far from intimating any Nicety of Explication in this Matter, that they explicitly reject them, and if they determine at all, seem to me to affirm, that the Resurrection Bodies (at least of the Just) will be greatly altered and diversified in their Condition, Qualities and Form.

St. *Paul* will be owned to have gone farther in opening the Mystery than any other : And he, methinks, is clear and express as to this, He tells you, that *It is sown in Corruption, Raised in Incorruption. — Sown in Dishonour, Raised in Glory. — Sown in Weakness, Raised in Power. — Sown a Natural Body, Raised a Spiritual Body.*

It may be worth while, to examine these Expressions singly, and weigh their Significance.

It is raised in Incorruption : According to this a Change in the very constituent elementary Parts, may seem necessary, for tho' Almighty Power can make all Sorts of Vessels, for the Furniture of both heavenly and earthly Mansions, yet it cannot make a Thing to be what it is not : Bodies therefore consisting of corruptible Parts, must be still liable to Corruption, since the contrary implies a Contradiction : Almighty Power may indeed preserve any Thing from Corruption, to what period of Duration it pleaseth ; this is true : But this neither solves the Difficulty nor comes up to the Apostle's Description : For corruptible and incorruptible, are incompatible Qualities, impossible to coincide in the same Subject : Whatever hath one Property must want the other, and consequently will always be different.

Again,

Again, *It is sown in Dishonour, raised in Glory* : The determinate Sense of the Expression is hard to fix. There is no saying what was the precise Idea of the Speaker, but that an Alteration of some kind is implied, we may reasonably presume : In the Epistle to the *Philippians*, the same Apostle tells you, that Christ shall change our vile Body, that it may be like unto his Glorious Body : From which nothing more is ascertain'd, than that whatever the Nature of his glorified Body is, our Bodies to be like that, must be changed, and fashioned anew.

The Example of *St. Stephen*, whose Face by the Force alone of an innocent well assured Heart, appeared as it had been the Face of an Angel.

The Example of *Moses*, who underwent an Effect of a similar Nature, by conversing with God upon the Mount ; nor lastly, the Example of our Saviour, whose Face at his Configuration, shined like the Sun, tho' they are proposed to help our Conceptions, have nothing in them to lead us to any Knowledge of the Thing in Question : All that they argue, all that can be inferred from them is, that the Bodies of Men when beatified, will be glorious in comparison of what they are now, but in what that Glory is to consist, they neither define, nor say.

Again, *It is sown in Weakness, it is raised in Power*. If by Weakness is meant as may be, Feebleness, Subjection to Disease, &c. Then by Power may be understood, Strength, Vigour, and Activity : Of these we have Ideas sufficiently clear : And this might be superinduced by a Renovation of the old Materials, without Exchange, or any Addition of new ones ; but then there will still be a Difficulty to reconcile it, with what is asserted in the next,

It

It is sown a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body : For natural and spiritual, are Ideas totally and essentially different : Of the Nature or Operations of a pure Spirit, we can form no Idea at all : There is nothing without or about us, that can help us to it, and tho' from what we feel within, we are led to infer, that we have some distinct and superior Principle to Matter, yet we cannot certainly say what it is, where it begins, how it operates, or in what it will end : We can define or explain it only by Negatives, we can say with Certainty, what it is not, but never with any Certainty, what it is : *So the Glory of the Celestial is one, and the Glory of the Terrestrial another* : But what Celestial or Spiritual Glory is, we have neither Eyes to see, nor Thoughts to conceive : And where the Glory is so exceeding, that we cannot look at it, nor into it, to the Prospect of the human Eye, it is the same as the thickest Darkness ; it is bounded and shut up by the one, as much as by the other.

In short, from the Antithesis in each Particular, it is evident, that the Resurrection Bodies, will be in many Respects, different from the present animal and fleshly ones ; and the Compilers of our Creeds have in this shewn a just Deference to the Authority of sacred Writ, by expressing the Article in such general Terms, as to give no Occasion for any Curiosity in the Explication of the General Doctrine.

In our Baptismal Creed, they have followed the old *Greek* and *Latin* Forms, where it is expressed by the Resurrection of the Flesh, by which the Antients meant to guard against an equivocal Evasion of some early Corrupters of Christian Doctrine, who began even in the Apostles Time, as *Hymæneus* and *Philetus*, to deny both the Certainty and the Ne-

cessity of a literal Resurrection, saying the Resurrection was already past, meaning by Resurrection in an allegorical Sense, a Renovation at Baptism, a shaking off the Death of Ignorance, and rising from the Grave of Sin and Corruption, and the old Man to the Life of God, thro' Christ.

But altho' the early Writers to guard against the Evasions of Allegorists, used the Word Flesh, rather than Body, as less equivocal, yet it is plain from their Writings, that they generally understood, that the Condition and Qualities of the Resurrection Body, would be greatly changed and diversified, so compounded and formed, as to be liable to no Decay, to require no Repairs by Food, nor any Interchanges of Rest or Refreshment ; whence we reasonably assume, that whatever they put into the Creed, they did not mean that the exact same Flesh, Blood, Sinews and Bones, in the precise identical Number, Quantity and Form, were to be raised and reunited.

(And hence a very important Observation strikes our Thoughts, that tho' here may be some Ground for Diversity of Opinion, and the Display of Ingenuity, I see no Subject for Passion, nor any thing to call it out into Exercise ; because I can see nothing dangerous or terrifying in the Consequence of either Opinion, they have neither any Tendency to hurt Religion, or Virtue ; therefore how to account for Mens being charged with Heresy or ill Meaning, for the Affirmative on either is very difficult. A Man who was not a firm Believer of the general Doctrine, would hardly trouble his Thoughts with an Inquiry of the Kind. The Manner therefore in which this Controversy was manag'd and kept up some Years ago, must be attributed either to a fond Display of the Controvertists Learning and Ingenuity
on

on one Side, or a Humour of dogmatifing and imposing on the other : Two Things that have in Fact puzzled and perplexed most Articles of Christian Doctrine, and have placed them often, in the Writings, sometimes in the Systems of Moderns, in a Light so very different from what they appear to all the sober and candid, in the Scriptures themselves.)

Be this as it will, plain it is, that all that the Church intended to obviate, or avoid, on one hand, was the Doctrine of an allegorical Resurrection, all that it intended to establish, was the Faith of a Real and a Literal one, which is the Faith that we are to defend ; and in which Faith we trust you will stand fast.

For why should it be thought a thing incredible, that God should raise the Dead ?

A Modern Infidel, hath indeed told us, “ that Experience is a stronger Argument against the Belief of it, than any Evidence of Testimony can be for it.” In which if there is some Sophistry, there is no Truth or conclusive Certainty. For all that can be proved from Experience is, that no such thing hath happened in our Days, or within our Knowledge, but will not prove that the Thing is impossible with God, or that no such Thing happened in Ages that are past. In Respect of God, that the Thing is possible, there is, there can be no Controversy. And when it is affirmed, that at a certain Time, and upon a certain Occasion, the Thing did happen ; all that we have to do, is to examine the Authenticity of the Testimony, and the Weight of the Evidence.

This is to be tried in the same Manner, that the Evidence, all historical Evidence of Facts is : If the Number of Witnesses be competent ;—If they had sufficient Means of Information ;—if they agree in their Testimony ;—if they had no Interest in imposing, or deceiving ; and had all the concomitant requisite Proofs of Sincerity, Honesty and good Capacity—their Testimony must be admitted, and our own scanty Experience will prove nothing against it ; except our Reason should clearly assure us, that the Thing is altogether impossible, and so incapable of Evidence.

This Evidence, then the general Doctrine hath : The Witnesses have been tried, by the severest Methods of Scrutiny ; and upon Trial, have been fairly acquitted of giving false Evidence ; or of designing any Imposture. This boasted Argument therefore from Experience, proves nothing against the general Doctrine : and it will besides be equally ridiculous to make any Difficulty in the Explication of the Mystery, an Argument against it ; for this let us hope with Humility, and wait with Resignation, and future Experience will make more than amends for the Defects of past and present Experience.

And so I proceed to the (2d) Thing proposed : To shew, that the Hopes necessarily arising in the Breast of every Christian, from the Truth and Certainty of the general Doctrine are such, as tend both to the Felicity and Perfection of our Beings.

The Felicity of every Being, it will be readily granted, consists in its Perfection ; the more perfect any Being is, the happier in Proportion it must be ;
for

for the very Reason, why God himself is perfectly happy, is because he is consummately perfect.

Now as the Perfection of Man, like that of all other Animals, consists in some Degree, in the Strength, Soundness and Vigour of all its Powers, It is proper to put you in mind, that the Perfection I mean, tho' this is always necessary to carry it forward, is of another Kind, and is to be estimated principally from their Improvements in moral Righteousness, and the Advances they have severally made, to preserve and recover that Purity and Uprightness in which they were made, and for which they were fitted.

Admitting this : What is farther necessary, will be only to prove that this Hope, as a Principle, by a proper and regular Efficiency, leads every Man who is possessed of it, to aim at this Perfection ; it both directs and influences, shews the Way and leads you forward, and if well grounded, firmly rooted and established, can never fail of availing to its End.

The Man who hath it, must feel it operating, and impelling, invigorating his Powers, pushing him forward from one degree of Perfection to another ; soliciting and persuading him to copy out every Perfection in his own Nature, which he admires and adores in the Divine ; to purify himself, even as God is pure. For his Hope is, that he is to live with God, and to be for ever in his Presence ; to live with him, whom without Holiness he can never see, and to be ever in that Presence where no unclean Thing can enter : And indeed, he who can believe, that he is to live again, without thinking often and seriously, what kind of Life he is to lead ; without examining whether he hath the Habits and Dispositions
proper

proper for such a kind of Life ; whether he is prepared to enter upon it, and qualified to enjoy it, is an odd and unaccountable Creature, so odd, that did we not daily see that there are such Creatures, it would be unimaginable, that any such could be.

Men may avoid for a Time, thinking of such Things, they have Arts which they are industrious both to seek, and to use, to evade and shift off such Thoughts ; from the Apprehension, that at present they would disturb their Repose and sour their Joy : But such I must tell, that as long as they think thus, they have yet to learn what true Happiness is, and know as little of themselves as they do of God and another World.

Admit I may, and I will, that they who are most happy here, have the best Chance for being happy hereafter : Nay, that I do not see how it is possible any Man can be happy 'in another World, who is truly unhappy in this ; and by saying so, I hope, rather to recover Sinners from their Delusion, than to confirm them in it ; for Happiness duly estimated, consists neither in the Abundance we possess, according to the Opinion of the Miser, nor in the inordinate Use of it, according to the Opinion of the Voluptuary ; but in the regular Exercise and Discipline of his Passions, their Equibilty, Evenness, Smoothness, and easy Subservience to the Dictates of Reason, good Sense, and good Nature : And every Man will find, whether he will make the Experiment or not, that the same Temper, the same Habits, the same Qualities and Dispositions, which render him happy, or unhappy here, will make him the same for ever, to whatever State he may be removed, till these are altered and corrected.

We

We are too much used to think otherwise, but think as we will, that Man is best qualified for the Society of Angels and Spirits already beatified, who feels a joytul Content and blisful Satisfaction in the Society of Men : And who I pray are these ? they only who watch carefully their Passions ; who keep them equable and regular ; attending upon their proper Objects ; forwarding their Ends ; and promoting their Interests ; and so making constant and great Improvements in Virtue, in Piety, and in Righteousness.

To this wicked Men are absolute Strangers, averse and reluctant : Envious, peevish and malicious Minds feel none of that Bliss, which such Culture produces. The same Sourness and Moroseness, which makes People unhappy in themselves now, and uneasy to others, would make them incapable of Bliss, even in Heaven, were they to be translated thither.

The Worm that never dies, unless mortified and killed here, would gnaw and tear them even there, the Fire that never consumes, would burn them up, and make every Place a Hell to them.

And this may convince some Religionists of the Folly and Absurdity of those Notions that turn Religion into Gloominess, Sourness, and Melancholy ; for true Religion consists as much in Chearfulness and good Nature, as in any thing else : And if they have not lost it already, the Persons are certainly in Danger of losing it altogether, the Moment they begin to be fullen and sour.

If Almighty God had decreed to make Souls happy, without their Choice and against their Consent ;
if

if his Mercy should sometimes interpose to stop the Issues of Justice ; he could not do it, it could not be, without altering and changing the Dispositions of their Souls, so as to fit them for new Habits, their Faculties also, to new Operations and Offices, *i. e.* they must be made anew, and undergo a second Creation ; without this, the present Habits of Sin and Vice, Affections, much and long depraved, Lusts unmortified, and Passions highly raised and inflamed, would defeat his Intentions ; infinite Wisdom could not contrive to make them happy.

Say, we should admit, that Men might pursue Happiness here in the Ways of Virtue, without the Expectation of any Thing to succeed in a World to come, that even deprived of these Hopes, they might desire and study to be virtuous from the Motives of Ease, Profit, and Convenience, in the Experience of the World, bad as it is, numerous, perhaps sufficient Encouragements may be found : Yet even this Man seemingly you may think in a fair and good Estate, wants something to make him perfect : Could such a Man work up his Soul to the Conviction, that his Happiness here, whatever it is, will be surely succeeded by a high Increase of it hereafter ; that the Sweetness of Temper, Composure of Mind, the Regularity in the Ebb and Flow of his Passions, the Things that do, and only can render his present State blissful, will hereafter be raised and improved ; and that what is here but transient and short, frequently interrupted and strongly abated, will be there endless, unintermitting and unallayed, his Desires, you will allow, would be greatly raised, his Progress towards Perfection mightily quickned.

However

However good and virtuous he might be, or you may suppose him, he would propose still higher Degrees to himself, more enlarged Views, and more comprehensive Schemes, and would never think he was virtuous and good enough, whilst it was possible he might be better.

He would not content himself with negative Virtue or negative Happiness, in abstaining merely from Evil, in being out of the Way, or the Reach of it; in a solitary Repose, a retired Ease and Contentment. (The dry insipid Pleasure of the Materialist, the farthest that Creatures who have no Hopes of an endless Being, can be supposed to go) the Fountain of his Heart would dilate and flow farther and wider; not confined within the narrow Circle of selfish Views, its benign Influences would extend and reach to others: To forward their Bliss also, by distributing to every Necessity of their Nature and Circumstances, easing all their Cares, and then only rejoicing in his own Beatitude, when he had been the Instrument of bringing the whole Race of intelligent Creatures, as far as his Power could extend, to be happy in themselves, and happy to one another.

This then, my Brethren, is the true Christian Plan; such is the Perfection which the Gospel points out and recommends, and the best, perhaps the only Reason that can be given, why so few of those who call themselves Christians (fewer yet of those who enjoy most of the means) ever aim at it, or endeavour i. is this, that their Bodies are the Prisons of their Souls, shut up in that dark Recess; their Thoughts are perpetually fastned on earthly Things: It is good for them they think to be here, and they look no farther: Did they encourage them to fly abroad, to soar into the Regions of Light and Bliss, to think of-

ten and seriously of the Things of another World; of what may reasonably be presumed, as probably to happen in a State to come: They would quickly see, how unqualified they are for the Enjoyment of it; the Necessity there is for altering and correcting their Dispositions and changing their Habits; (*to put off the old Man, to be renewed in Christ*) and this Conviction would soon work its Effect in the wanted Reformation.

The Reason of this is founded in our very Nature: he that is temperate in all Things, who lives soberly and endures patiently to obtain a corruptible Crown, will certainly do more, when an incorruptible is added as the Prize of his Calling: *If the earnest Expectation of the Creature waiteth for the Manifestation of the Sons of God*; nothing will be able that I can see to separate it, from the Love of Christ; from that Love which sheds Bliss upon the Enjoyments of this Life, and at the same Time that it prepares for the Enjoyment of another, gives a Foretaste and Relish of them, a justifiable Contempt of all that we leave behind, and an Eagerness to press forward, and to snatch the Prize.

This Expectation is what the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, calls the *strong Consolation* ἀνύψωσις τῆς ψυχῆς, * the Hope (literally the Anchor) of the Soul, both sure and stedfast. Let us meditate upon it, and we shall find that no Consolation can be stronger, no State of Life so uncomfortable, which it will not compose and soften; even the bitterest Cup of Affliction, it will in some degree sweeten.

Are we poor and thence contemptible? diseased and thence loathing? deformed and thence slighted,
or

* The Greek was omitted in speaking.

or abhorred? what a Consolation must it be to us to consider, that we are passing to a State, where all Tears will be wiped from our Eyes, and all Anguish from our Hearts, and neither Sorrow or Pain will longer affect us; where we shall lay aside our Rags, be cleansed of our Filth, and put off our Deformity, and rise in Beauty, Pomp, Splendor and Glory, equal to the best and greatest of those, who now despise us.

☞ Is our Charity mistaken, our Virtue misrated, or our good Name traduced? our Consolation is this, that a Time is coming, when Hypocrisy will reign no longer, when its foul Mask will be stripped of; Malice will not be able to blacken, Ignorance to misrepresent us, nor Treachery to hurt us. When the Generous can no longer be imposed upon, nor the Good-natured deceived, or perverted; when Truth will be openly asserted, and the very Temptations to hide, or pervert it, will all be removed; and none but upright and discerning Spirits will be armed with Power; when all that are Selfish, Sensual and Devilish, will be abashed, confounded, and seek to hide themselves; and the truly Righteous, who taught it in their Discourse, enforced it by their Authority, and recommended it by their Practice, shall *shine like Stars in the Firmament, like the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.*

For we shall all be changed, and so it must be to make us fit Inhabitants of those holy Mansions; our Bodies, though now feeble and weak, shall there be vigorous and strong. Tho' now animal and corruptible, subject to many noisome Effects and tending every Day towards Dissolution, shall there be Spiritual and Immortal, without Grossness or Incumbrance, without Pain or Passibility; without Alteration or Decay: This is the *strong Consolation*, the Hope that

is set before us. The very Hope, by which Christ himself endured the Pain, despised the Cross, and thence was highly exalted, to sit down at the Right-hand on the Throne of God.

Consider him therefore, least ye be wearied and faint in your Minds; resist manfully striving against Sin, that no Root of Bitterness spring up to trouble you, whereby ye may be defiled; but having this Hope, purify yourselves, even as he was pure. Thus following him in the Example of his Holiness, we may follow him also to Glory; the Reversion is certain, and the Possession, which ONE MOMENT may put the soundest and healthiest of us all into, will be ever joyous and sweet.

I conclude therefore with wishing, that as we all believe a Resurrection to Judgment and Life, that Belief may have its proper Effect, in raising us from Sin to a Life of Righteousness, that when we do rise, it may be to our own and God's Eternal Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



F I N I S.

